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**Boggy Solitudes
of
NANTUCKET**



ANNE WILSON



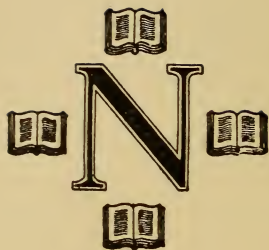
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BOGGY SOLITUDES OF NANTUCKET



BOGGY SOLITUDES OF NANTUCKET

By
ANNE WILSON



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TO MY MOTHER

*From out the ground
A little bluebell
Peeped early forth
At the lovely dell;
A little bee came
And sipped with glee:
For each other made
They surely must be.*

—GOETHE.

“ Can we conceive what humanity would be if it did not know the flowers? If these did not exist, if they had all been hidden from our gaze, as are probably a thousand no less fairy sights that are all around us, but invisible to our eyes, would our character, our faculties, our sense of the beautiful, our aptitude for happiness, be quite the same? ”—MÆTERLINCK.



FOREWORD



WHAT is more natural than the love of wild flowers—the treasures of moor, marsh, and quaking bog, of inspiring surroundings, where days of exquisite delight may be spent, that the happy memories may be stored away for the brightening of the bleak days

of winter? We are told life began in a garden, and

“ How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned, but with herbs and flowers? ”

Seacoast flowers are usually more brilliant in color than the same flowers in the interior,

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and the summers at Nantucket, in the absence of poisonous snakes, are especially favored for this recreation in "boggy solitudes."

It is not surprising to learn that a hundred years ago the Frenchman, Marsillac, plunged into these swamps to discover their treasures, heedless of the delicate silk stockings he wore; or that Dr. Asa Gray, our greatest botanist, should say he was not astonished at anything found growing in Nantucket.

The whole island is a veritable garden spot. One has only to go on the moors to appreciate the truth of this statement. Flower succeeds flower, springing up from the sandy soil and moss, in greatest luxuriance and profusion, beginning with the tiny hepatica and blue flash of the violet in the spring to the showy golden-rod and imperial aster of the fall.

Years ago when thousands of sheep roamed here at will, nibbling the first of any flowering plant that appeared, it was not easy to forestall these early breakfasters, and in consequence it was almost impossible to find out what really did grow on the island.

Fortunately for the lover of plant life there are many ways in which seed may be scattered. Sometimes they are brought in the trunks of trees that float away encumbered with earth; occasionally in blocks of ice; or again, from the opposite direction, by the warm waters of the Gulf Stream; frequently, too, a tornado will carry them a great distance, and often they are found in the balls of mud on the feet of the migratory water birds.

After the planting of the pine trees on the island, laws were passed forbidding the unlimited ranging of sheep. This improved conditions wonderfully, so that large companies of flowers were soon to be found that had hitherto been thought rare, while new plants were constantly discovered. Among them the dainty Scotch heather has appeared, and a wealth of orchids is also to be found. The moccasin flower, *arethusa*, *pogonia*, *calopogon*,—white-fringed and green-fringed orchis,—and two kinds of lady's tresses are abundant, while the tway blade is discovered less frequently. Most of these orchids are seen growing from the

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bulb in the cool shady bogs, while the moccasin flower lends its rich color, instead, to the meadowlands. If you take a microscope and study the eccentric bearded lip found in every orchid, you will feel rewarded, and will become more familiar with their wondrous beauty.

Here, too, delicate ferns nestling amid fairy-like mosses bring their message to the seeker of the beautiful. Nothing in nature can be more lovely and impressive than the unfurling of the fragile sail-like frond of a tender fern. While as to the grasses, a new interest arises when we realize that our existence depends almost entirely upon them.

Hamilton Gibson tells us that swamps are living calendars, not merely of seasons alone, but of every successive month, and that the record is unmistakably disclosed: whispered in the fragrant breath of the flowers and the aromatic herbage crushed under foot, floating on filmy wing of dragon-fly and butterfly, or glistening in the air on silky seeds.

Slip off the tether of the daily routine,

wander where the bees and butterflies wake
the sleeping buds, and read this record as
written by the hand of Nature.

“ Flowers preach to us if we will hear.
The rose saith in the dewy morn,
‘ I am most fair,
Yet all my loveliness is born
Upon a thorn.’
The lilies say, ‘ Behold how we
Preach, without words, of purity!’

“ But not alone the fairest flowers:
The merest grass
Along the roadside when we pass,
Lichen and moss and sturdy weed,
Tell of His love who sends the dew,
The rain, and the sunshine too,
To nourish one small seed.”

—D. G. ROSSETTI.

“ You should have heard him speak of what he loved : of the tent pitched beside the talking water ; of the stars overhead at night ; of the blest return of the morning, the peep of day over the moors, the awaking birds among the birches ; how he abhorred the long winter shut in cities : and with what delight, at the return of spring, he once more pitched his camp in the living out-of-doors.”—
STEVENSON.

CHAPTER I



HE sun came up, a golden ball in the morning sky, and a meadow-lark richly warbled in flute-like tones, "Good morning," before resting on an azalea twig. It was not long before robin in red vest came hopping over the ground, express-

ing, by a toss of the head, his general satisfaction with the day, and immediately finding a good fat worm for his breakfast. With two or three more hops, came "Cheer up! Cheer up!" in greeting to the fields of snowy daisies and the golden buttercups, now but just awake. Stately purple-crowned thistles looked on, unmoved by the

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gentle wind, which with caressing hand soothed the grasses, glittering with the early sunbeams upon them like so many diamonds in a coronet. Not far off was a group of rabbit-foot clover, huddling close together, their soft dove-colored bushy heads like woolly sheep upon the moorland.

Now Bob White ventures near, understanding the cruel hunter with gun lurks not in this peaceful spot, and he can go about in perfect safety. A bee-martin, perched on a scrub oak near the meadow-lark, calls "Good morning! Good morning!" while Jack rabbit runs up from the beach grass to hearken to the concert, for he has heard the orchestra strike up in welcome to the newborn day. His ears look longer, and are more erect than ever, as he sits by a bunch of plantain, nibbling the first course of his morning meal.

The faint low trills of a song sparrow gladden every pause in the program, and there is continuous music, while from every side comes "z-zip! z-zip!" and the drowsy chirp and hum in the insect world.

The scene is a cliff, studded with bay berry and sweet fern, ladening the air with fragrance. Below is a stretch of yellow sand, while overhead the sky, a canopy of delicate blue with feathery white clouds dancing like fairies in the boundless space, melts into the blue of the ocean. Not far away a lighthouse stands solitary, a silent sentinel by day, a welcome beacon by night. Some butterflies, white as sails upon the sea, dip lightly on the little white violets which have lingered with the bluets that carpeted the moors with their dainty flowers in early spring.

The trailing arbutus, with its waxy pink and white blossoms, and fragrant breath, has left its sturdy leaves and an occasional blossom on the trailing shrubby stems, and the large velvety bird-foot violet, which saves us an autumn blossom, mingles with the starry-flowered chickweed, whose mission is to satisfy the delicate appetite of caged song birds; while everywhere are seen the short, close, rusty green spikes of the blue-purple flowered self-

heal, or brunella, contented bumble-bees sipping its sweets with reckless abandon.

Just over the cliff the broom mingles bright yellow blossoms with its own rich green foliage, while within a stone's-throw is the greatest treasure of all, so carefully guarded by brambles and thick growth of tangled bushes that very few would ever discover it. The fern lover would go into raptures at the prospect, for here at the entrance of his realm the king in majesty rises to greet you. In regal splendor stand rich specimens of the *Osmunda regalis*, or royal fern, while thousands of marsh and sensitive ferns throng the little colony over which the king so proudly reigns.

Not a step can be taken without crushing out the life of some of them, while in an adjoining realm, so to speak, are great crowns of cinnamon osmunda, five or six feet tall, with their woolly-headed croziers,—which the little birds so love, using the fern cotton to soften their nests. Here also is a colony of smaller swamp ferns: indeed

“ Pleasures lie thickest where no pleasures seem,
There’s not a leaf that falls upon the ground
But holds some joy of silence or of sound
But sprite begotten of a summer dream.”

“ A little marsh plant, yellow green,
And pricked at lip with tender red,
Tread close, and either way you tread
Some faint black water jets between,
Lest you should bruise the curious head.

“ You call it sundew: how it grows,
If with its color it have breath,
If life taste sweet to it, if death
Pain its soft petal, no man knows:
Man has no sight or sense that saith.”

—SWINBURNE.

CHAPTER II



OB WHITE! Bob White!" It was but dawn, and another day was breaking, when I turned over sleepily, trying to rouse myself, and wondering why Bob White was pleading so early.

"Bob White! Bob White!"

I sprang out of bed and ran over to the little window from which there was a glorious view of a long stretch of moorland melting into low hills covered with all the different shades of green, from the pale leaves of the bay berry to the blackness of the stunted growth of heath-like little shrubs. It all

looked lovely and peaceful in the gray dawn, which was now gradually taking on a brilliant rosy hue, for the sun, not caught napping as I had been, was getting ready to leap above the distant horizon, bringing in his train another day.

Right under the window was the dear little fellow, my Bob White, in his soft brown feather coat, and he seemed to be quite alone. But soon along there came hopping a little fellow in red vest, who sang out, "Cheer up! Cheer up!"

Bob White and the robin eyed each other, and then proceeded to hunt a breakfast before beginning the business of the day. They filled me with a longing to get out into the open, and I waited restlessly for the June afternoon walk over the moors.

Little sundrops and yellow stargrass blossomed along the roadside I took over the hills to a bog. The shady spots were filled with a pale purple flower—the crane's bill or wild geranium, named for the beak-like appear-

ance of its fruit, which was forming on the same flower stalks with new buds. An otherwise desolate place was gay with the spikes of the fireweed, whose willow-like leaves and magenta pink flowers towered several feet above the neighboring plants.

An occasional mullein, "the burly weed with mittens and cloak," stood as silent sentinel, while a humming-bird flitted in and out among the leaves, gathering the soft hairs to line its tiny nest.

The first pyrola, with flowers so like the lily of the valley it is often called "wild lily of the valley," was blooming on the hillside under some huckleberry bushes. The green leaves of the pyrola were used in early days for bruises, which won for it the homely name "shin leaf."

The swamp was framed by a tangled growth, and just within was a brilliant carpet of mingled soft green club moss and glittering red leaves, growing in an open rosette on the ground, and the young leaves, curled like fern fronds, seemed in the sunshine to be covered

with sparkling dewdrops. But the misguided insect lighting on these plants is caught by this dew-like substance and afterwards held fast by the strong red bristles. This plant is the round-leaved sundew, whose flowers, scarcely noticeable, are small and white, growing on an F-sided curved raceme of buds mostly, while the flowers of the thread-leaved sundew are purplish pink.

“ But alas

What’s this I hear

About the new carnivora?

Can little plants

Eat bugs and ants

And gnats and flies?—

A sort of retrograding:

Surely the fare

Of flowers is air

Or sunshine sweet:

They shouldn’t eat

Or do aught so degrading!”

We are glad of the explanation for these plants being “carnivorous”—in that the soil in which they grow has little nitrogen.

Here and there low marsh ferns had thrown themselves with the careless, artistic hand of nature from the grayish silver-green quaking sphagnum, and every now and then a small "peach-blossomed" colony of pogonia or adder's mouth filled the air with the odor of violets, the while turning on their stalks to follow the sun and expand in its warmth. It is said the original home of this orchid is Japan.

Clammy azalea buds were just peeping out, and from the lovely pink and white blossoms scattered through the green hedge encircling the little swamp was heard a

"Lovely bird with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things."

Just outside the delicate purple-pink polygala was blooming. Its little flowers clustered along the upper part of leafy stems, though there is an interesting fertile white flower concealed on the subterranean stem, and found only by those who dig up the plant.

From this swamp I went to one where the birds were all singing their evensong. Wild strawberries were ripening in greatest abundance, and cranberry vines, with pink nodding flowers on wiry stems, mingled with luxuriant moss, from which sprang finest specimens of pogonia.

Amid the marsh ferns nodded the different grasses. There also flourished the azalea, and here and there wild rosebuds, from white to the deepest pink, while near them some buttercups had lingered, which made one think of

“ Down in a garden olden,—
 Just where, I do not know,—
 A buttercup all golden
 Chanced near a rose to grow:
 And every morning early,
 Before the buds were up,
 A tiny dewdrop pearly
 Fell in this little cup.

“ This was the drink of water
 The rose had ev’ry day;

But no one yet has caught her
 While drinking in this way.
 Surely it is no treason
 To say she drinks so yet,
 For that may be the reason,
 Her lips with dew are wet."

Great spires of fireweed sprang up everywhere, and the little cinquefoil, with its five-fingered leaves and tiny bright yellow flowers, was very abundant, in striking contrast to the regal iris, with its large showy blue-violet flower—

"Born in the purple, born to joy and pleasance,
 Thou dost not toil nor spin,
 But makest glad and radiant with thy presence
 The meadow and the linn.

"The wind blows, and uplifts thy drooping banner,
 And round thee throng and run
 The rushes, the green yeomen of thy manor,
 The outlaws of the sun.

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“Thou art the iris, fair among the fairest,
Who armed with golden rod,
And winged with the celestial azure bearest
The message of some god.”

“ What impulse stirs the feathery grasses,
And dips along their wavering line ;
While, as the sudden tremor passes,
Two strange sweet eyes look up to mine ?
Eyes with a more than human pleasing,
So poet-deep, so maiden-shy !
Till all my soul is drowned in gazing,
 O rare blue eyes !

“ My spirit flower, my heaven-sent blossom,
I held your secret in my hand,
I caught and held you to my bosom,
I thought to know and understand .
O fatal haste ! Thou hast undone me,
Yet, yet, unsolved the mystery lies—
They closed, and shut the wonder from me,
 Those deep, dark eyes ! ”

CHAPTER III



It seems strange there are no two bogs exactly alike. Nature does not repeat herself, there being ever-varying combinations. One thing is certain, the greatest treasures, such as we are seeking, are usually found in the least promising bogs. Of-

ten there is a network of blackberry brambles which are forbidding to most of us, while among these will rise the stately brake. Bay and black alder, a member of the holly family, which will have its bright red berries after the leaves turn black and fall, will be mingled with clammy azalea, clethra, sassafras, or oc-

asionally a wild black cherry, aspen, or willow, all bound together by the wild pink morning glory (bindweed) or the iron arm of the fox grape.

However, patience is sure to be rewarded, and you will soon be admitted an honored guest into marvelous rooms or bowers carpeted with velvety moss, or perhaps cranberry blossoms or berries on their slender, trailing, wiry stems; or yet a delicate tracery of wild strawberry leaves, or cinquefoil, weaving a texture so much more beautiful and fantastic than any fashioned by the loom of man.

To-day, in each of the bogs, there were the old friends,—cinnamon, and snake, and the first glimpse of the interrupted fern, a very graceful plant, quite like the cinnamon, but easily distinguished by its fertile fronds, which have some of the middle pinnæ bearing fruit. These fertile fronds are set in a vase formed by the sterile fronds, which fall away in all directions. In the first, against the green background, were the little yellow flowers streaked with dark red, growing from

the axils of the leaves of the loose strife. Over these lingered some butterflies of the same color, proving again the "Painted Lady" is a wise little creature, who for protection seeks a flower to match her pretty wings.

A few belated cranberry blossoms must surely be the pink lilies in the garden of the same fairies who use for tables the bright red toadstools springing up amid the velvety green club moss. Delicate perfumes of azalea, bay, and sweet fern mingled here together.

In another swamp some blue-eyed grass, or "eye-bright," had found a home where the sunlight touched the center of pure gold. Waving there, among its seed pods, graceful and dainty, it made a spot almost as blue as the heavens above. One can scarcely believe this modest little flower belongs to the same family as the showy fleur-de-lis, or iris, described by Ruskin as "the flower of chivalry, having a sword for its leaf and a lily for its heart."

Then came an unexpected bower of wild roses, while near a large crown of cinnamon

fern were the white bells of the low-growing stagger bush. The sheep and calves find the leaves of this most appetizing, but, being poisonous, it will cause the animals to stagger unsteadily about after indulging too freely in the "forbidden fruit." Here also was found the tiny pink sheep laurel, which is such a feast to the eyes, but so deadly to cattle.

The silence was broken by the distant voice of the sea, or "Pthrung! pthrung!" croak of the old frogs, or the "Pug! pug!" of their children. A red-winged blackbird sat on the topmost twig of a viburnum, as if looking for the blackberries of October, and with "Chur-ree! chur-ree! chur-ree!" flies away, his scarlet-tipped wing flashing in the sunshine, while a blue-winged dragon-fly glides in and out among the reeds and rushes, and the song sparrows trill gaily.

The moors with their patches of sweet fern and tender reddish-green oak leaves stretch out to the sea, with here and there a gorgeous purple or yellow thistle, so well equipped for life's battle, giving color to the scene. Feast-

ing on these are the bumble-bees and butterflies, and near one lay the skin of a harmless snake, thrown aside for a new spring garment.

In every bog is a rival. It is the poison ivy,—well named “mercury,”—which I always find getting there ahead of me, and never leaving. Fortunate are they who are not susceptible to baneful influences of this deceptive climber. It has a smooth, fresh green leaf in threes, and can easily be distinguished from woodbine, which is a five-leafed vine. Both change to a brilliant red in the fall, and both have berries. By means of the tiny rootlets on its stem poison ivy climbs flauntingly, and gaudily, to any height; but if there is nothing on which to cling, it is content to mass itself upon the ground.

“ O star on the breast of the river,
O marvel of bloom and grace,
Did you fall straight down from heaven
Out of the sweetest place?
You are white as the thoughts of an angel,
Your heart is steeped in the sun;
Did you grow in the golden city,
My pure and radiant one?

“ Nay, nay, I fell not out of heaven,
None gave me my saintly white;
It slowly grew from the blackness,
Far down in the dreary night;
From the ooze of the silent river
I won my glory and grace;
White souls fall not, O my poet,
They rise to the sweetest place.”

—MARY FRANCES BATTS.

CHAPTER IV



AMONG the very common flowers that are seen everywhere is the tansy, or bitter buttons, looking like a cluster of yellow daisy centers. The name comes from athanasia (immortality), and the aromatic smell declares it to be an herb,

whose leaves are dried and made into a tea thought to cure every ill to which flesh is heir. With the Bouncing Bets, yellow day lilies, and many other run-aways from old gardens, it is to be found basking in the sunshine, like a vagrant, along the roadsides.

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“The wholesome yarrows’ clusters fine
Like frosted silver dimly shine.”

This is another common, insignificant flower, grayish white or pink, with herby odor, once useful, but now trudging along the roadside like “silent schoolgirls clad in dull uniform.”

The shepherd’s purse, with its inconspicuous white flowers and seed pods, whose shape gives the name, is also called mother’s heart.

The poor man’s weatherglass, or shepherd’s clock, is found in violet as well as red, the latter being very common, and known as scarlet pimpernel. Whenever its tiny scarlet blossoms are seen folding up their delicate petals, it may be taken as a certain indication of approaching rain. Darwin says:

“Closed is the pink-eyed pimpernel,
In fiery red the sun doth rise,
Then wades through clouds to mount the skies;
'Twill surely rain, we see't with sorrow,
No working in the fields to-morrow.”

It is true that this little weather prophet in sunshine is found open, while in cloudy or rainy weather there are only closed buds.

The delicate little yellow wood sorrel, with its sunny blossom and tiny heart-shaped leaf, and dandelions, are springing up, while the wild pea, or lupine, vivid blue and pink, is running along the sandy stretches. Farmers, looking upon the wild pea as a robber of good soil, have given it the name lupine, from *lupus* (wolf). Still another name for it is old maid's bonnet.

Near Beechwood Farm is a swamp where the pitcher plant grows. Its odd tubular leaves give it this name, but it is also known as the side-saddle flower and huntsman's cup. At the bottom of the pitcher always will be found many trapped insects, which are supposed to nourish the plant. Inside of these leaves is a sweet secretion which attracts the insects, and, once in, it is impossible for them to escape from the fatal feast-board, as the tube has hairy sides, and the descent into "Avernus" is far easier than the return.

Among the "martyrs" are flies, gnats, mosquitoes, beetles, and other little insects. Early in July the flower is in perfection, and is green and brownish-purple, while the outside of the pitchers are usually veined with red or purple lines, making in all a mystic blending of color like that of an antique rug. A spongy bog is its usual home.

The shrubs and vines had grown most luxuriantly about this treasure, and it was all one could do to get an occasional glimpse of the blue above, when pausing for breath in the effort to make a way through. Grapevines ran riot in this jungle of small red maple trees, clethra, azalea, and other shrubs. Almost disheartened when halfway through, I stopped—my feet had sunk far into an emerald green moss, from which sprang brakes and ferns of tropical luxuriance.

Suddenly there appeared a quaint little pulpit of purple and green, with its jolly little purple preacher, and six pale green leaves overhead. Sad to say, this little preacher has the reputation of devouring unsuspecting little

gnats and flies. His audience to-day consisted of a group of pink pogonia, who, with bowed heads, were listening reverently and filling the air with their delicate perfume. Later, "Jack" has bright red berries, which the Indians were wont to boil for food. "Jack" is a member of the quaint and interesting arum family, whose flowers are closely packed on a thick spadix, usually sheathed with handsome spathe. These flowers are a most beautiful study under the microscope. I never see a Jack-in-the-pulpit but I think of the bulb from which he grows, and the boyhood experience of Hamilton Gibson.

Gibson says, "I only knew that a real nice boy across the way seemed very fond of those little Indian turnips, called them 'sugar roots,' and said that they were full of honey. And as he bit off his eager mouthful, and refused to let me taste, I sought one for myself, and, generous boy that he was, he showed me where to find the buried treasure. It was like a small turnip, an innocent-looking affair (and so was the nice boy's modeled piece of

apple, by the way). But oh! the sudden revelation of the red-hot reservoir of chain-lightning that crammed that innocent bulb! Even as I think of it, how I long once more to interview that real nice boy who opened up the mysteries of the 'sugar root' to my tempted curiosity. Let boys beware of this wild, red-hot coal; and, should they be impelled by a desire to test the unknown flavor, let them solace themselves with a less dangerous mixture of four papers of cambric needles and a spoonful of pounded glass. This will give a faint suggestion of the racy pungency of the Indian turnip."

A rest in this little chapel gave me new courage to go on, and before long the much-desired pitcher plants were found growing on the edge of what had been a small pond. *Pogonia* and *calopogon* were blooming near, while exquisite white pond-lilies were hovering over their rounded green leaves—

"Whence, O fragrant form of light,
Hast thou drifted through the night,

Swanlike, to a leafy nest,
On the restless waves, at rest?

“ Art thou from the snowy zone
Of a mountain-summit blown,
Or the blossom of a dream,
Fashioned in the foamy stream?

“ Nay—methinks the maiden moon,
When the daylight came too soon,
Fleeing from her bath to hide,
Left her garment in the tide.”

In the water lily, or water nymph, it is difficult to decide where the petals end and where the stamens begin. Dr. Asa Gray says “the petals are numerous, the innermost gradually being transformed into stamens,” while other well-known authorities speak of the petals as being enlarged and flattened stamens.

Every now and then along the way the brilliant yellow blossoms of the jewel weed nod among the thin green leaves in the borders of marshes, while the ruby-throated humming-

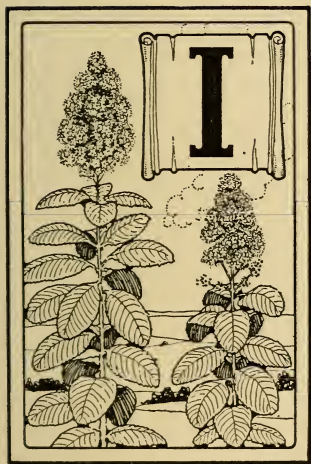
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bird hovers over them. When the seed pods form they pop open at the slightest touch, and from this comes the name "touch-me-not," while the leaves have the magic of being transformed, apparently, into iridescent frosted silver when held beneath the water.

“ Every one who has been upon a walking or a boating tour, living in the open air, with the body in constant exercise and the mind in fallow, knows true ease and quiet.

“ The irritating action of the brain is set at rest; we think in a plain unfeverish temper; little things seem big enough, and great things no longer portentous: and the world is smilingly accepted as it is.”—STEVENSON.

CHAPTER V



It is the last of July in the bogs—and the calopogon is about gone, the pogonia and arethusa of the past, and white-and green-fringed orchis just coming into bloom. Within ten minutes I found four orchis to-day, a belated pogonia, some calopo-

gon, and green-fringed orchis and white-fringed orchis. These were all growing in a bog towards Tom Never's Head.

The entire bog is a network of the thread-leaved sundew, with its delicate little nodding raceme of buds, and a solitary pink flower

opening each day to the sun, amid its glistening jewel-like leaves. It was impossible to take a step without crushing it. Soft gray reindeer moss and liverworts, also many other interesting little growths, were on every hand within the spongy bog.

Great spires of fireweed had assembled in companies, and were devouring the outer edge, while one queer moss, in grotesque shapes, looked like a miniature menagerie among the vines of cranberry and wild strawberry.

Just outside was the solid hedge of azalea and the elder, with its great, creamy, sweet-smelling, lacy flowers, in striking contrast to the rich dark-green leaves. Flies and beetles hovered near, attracted by the honey-like odor of the plant. Later in the year the clusters of dark, juicy fruit will make the spicy elderberry wine so beloved of our forefathers.

Wild roses twined in and out, a pink blossom here and there, while interesting wand-like aletris stood amid the tufts of yellow-green leaves. These blossoms, wrinkled and

rough outside, as if dusted with white meal, give this name. Another name, colic root, is the keynote to its medicinal value.

In with this was one stray blossom and the leaves of the arethusa. This Indian pink is an orchid of early June, and, like the pogonia, has the odor of sweet violets.

Chicory, or succory, with its bright azure-blue flowers, fading away into white on being picked, is marching along the roadside wastes in company with common St. John's wort, whose bright yellow blossoms are disliked by the farmer almost as much as the Queen Anne's lace, with fringy foliage and lacy blossom. Another name for the latter, bird's nest, is very appropriate, for in late summer the flowers form in a concave cluster, which is very much like the homes of our feathered friends.

Here and there are fields of wild mustard, whose pale yellow blossoms make a bit of charming color, and round about the bushy little indigo of the pea family, with its clover-like leaves and small bright yellow flowers,

has suddenly burst into bloom, while very near is found the tephrosia, whose pink and yellow blossoms, mingled with its sensitive sage-green leaves, make one of the daintiest bouquets imaginable. The latter is a member of the pulse family, and easily identified by the butterfly-shaped corolla. The flowers are always arranged in fives, or multiples of five, while the stamens, never more than ten, are generally united by their filaments.

Saucy black-eyed Susans are in the hot, sunny fields:

“ Merry, laughing, black-eyed Susans grow along the
dusty way,
Homely, wholesome, happy-hearted little country maids
are they.
Frailer sisters shrink and wither, 'neath the hot mid-
summer sun,
But these sturdy ones will revel till the long bright days
are done.”

The greenish lavender-pink flowers of the common milkweed are also blooming on the

moorland, and a little later these will be the pretty pods of white silk, which the faintest zephyr floats far away. When the season for this arrives, the birds will be feasting off the pale-red speckled berries of the false Solomon's seal, which in early summer had a spike of fine white flowers, making it a much handsomer plant than the true Solomon's seal. The root of the latter has a pitted appearance, for as each stalk is broken off a scar is left to mark the fracture.

All over the moors are great beds of meal plum, while the everlasting, with its many pearly-white scale blossoms, looking through the lens like miniature water lilies, is now plentiful.

At sunset, jogging along, we see the regular, perfect flowers of the evening primrose, its fragrant cups of pale gold opening one by one; but at the end of summer they will keep open all day long.

The white-fringed orchis is quite apt to choose the same location in the swamp and peat bogs for its home as the calopogon. What

could be more exquisite than these pure-white fragrant flowers, with fringed lips, clustered on a spike, while the lance-shaped leaves clasp the stem? Sometimes it would seem they run away into the blueberry bushes and other shrubs for protection, and it takes an "orchid eye" to detect them in some of their haunts.

Along the roadside, within a few feet of the path, are the green-fringed orchis, which so resemble the white, but are not so beautiful, and occasionally a yellow-fringed one is found.

On the commons, the moccasin flower, or lady's slipper, gives when blooming a pink tinge amid the green. This plant is especially beautiful. The two broad leaves arise from the underground stem, appearing to spring from the very root, while a slender leafless stalk ascends between the leaves, bearing a single flower, commonly known as lady's slipper; but moccasin flower is better, as it more resembles an Indian moccasin. Still another name is Noah's ark. Elaine Goodale gives a vivid description of it:

“ Graceful and tall the slender, drooping stem,
With two broad leaves below,
Shapely the flower so lightly poised between,
And warm her rosy glow.”

There is a little shrub, very abundant, known as hard hack, or better named, from its pink spires, steeple-bush. It blossoms along with the soft plumes of the meadow-sweet through the summer. These two are much alike, but the flowers of the former are pinker, while the under side of the leaves and brown stems look cottony.

Peaceful and innocent is the afternoon, save for the occasional high-sailing hawk, making ominous, graceful swoops in the blue above, ready to pounce on the unsuspecting little birds, comfortably housed in their downy nests among the low, clustering bushes.

John Burroughs says the henhawk likes the haze and calm of these long warm days. “He is a bird of leisure, and seems always at his ease. How beautiful and majestic are his movements! So self-poised and easy, such

60 BOGGY SOLITUDES OF NANTUCKET

an entire absence of haste, such a magnificent amplitude of circles and spirals, such a haughty, imperial grace, and, occasionally, such daring aërial evolutions!"

“ Lo here hath been dawning another blue day;
Think wilt thou let it slip useless away?
Out of Eternity this new day is born;
Into Eternity at night will return.

“ Behold it aforetime no eye ever did;
So soon it forever from all eyes is hid.
Here hath been dawning another blue day,
Think wilt thou let it slip useless away? ”

—CARLYLE.

CHAPTER VI



THE berry family on the island of Nantucket is large, interesting, and useful. First, there is the common blackberry, whose branches in June are covered with lovely white blossoms, but also armed with such stout, short prickles that one is not tempted a second time to take a spray. Growing along the roadsides and rutted lanes, they are conveniently near for the gatherers of the fruit later on.

Sometimes we find them in the pine woods, near the Indian pipes—which seems to indi-

cate they might be smokers—but here they stand upon a soft golden-brown carpet of the fallen pine needles, surrounded by a dainty garden of the fragrant, fragile little pinkish-white pipsissewa, whose anthers give to it a purplish tinge. The shining, smooth ever-green leaves make the whole beautiful plant the very essence of the woods.

In extreme youth the fruit of the blackberries is green, changing afterwards in the sun's warm rays to red, and then black. A modest little cousin of these is the running swamp blackberry, with trailing reddish stems and shining thick leaves, and delicate white blossoms that will later be a small black fruit, but of little value except to the birds.

The blueberries also love the bogs and low thickets near the orchis and sundews. They are well named, for many of them, when ripe, are the loveliest blue, while the huckleberries are very black.

Both the blueberries and huckleberries when young wear white frilled caps, which are discarded when they become older.

Right in the midst of a little colony of blueberries we will find the white-fringed orchis, which

“ With their coy and dainty graces,
Lure us to their hiding places.”

These look all the whiter by contrast with their surroundings. The huckleberries, on the contrary, love the hillsides better than the swamps, and generally will have great gardens of sweet fern and tall brakes growing all about them.

Wild strawberries run over the mosses in with the sundews. In early summer they are dressed in green leaves and white blossoms, and later, when comes the bright red fruit, the leaves are prettily colored with all the gay tints of autumn. Sometimes the yellow-flowered strawberry is confused with the cinquefoil, but it is really very easy to distinguish them apart, when we remember that the strawberry has three divisions of a leaf, while the cinquefoil has, as its name indicates,

five. In our ramble we may chance upon the wild gooseberry and raspberry in the thickets surrounding little swamps, as if they too wanted to aid in the barricade to the treasures within.

The bright red checkerberries, here found in profusion, are much relished by the birds, while the children prefer to chew the new tender red leaves. These plants, called "youngsters" in some localities, here are known as "drunkards," as a tea made of the leaves, when freely imbibed, will make one rather uncertain as to locomotion. Often late in the season the waxy white flower bells are found at the same time with the fruit.

All summer long, at any hour, we may see the field mouse run out from its nest in the ground, where it has its little store of grain laid up for future use, while on gray, foggy days wonderful sights are the spiders' webs, delicately flaunted like ghostly banner from every blade of grass. There will be thousands of them, as far as the eye can reach, glistening with the jewel-like drops of moist-

ure upon them, and there is never a day without the cheerful accompaniment of the song sparrow adding to the joys of the passing hours.

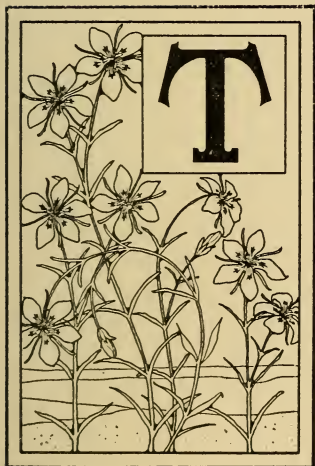
“ A few notes, three or four,
Repeated o'er and o'er
 In low, soft, liquid strains,
Make all thy hymn of praise,
Sing all love's tender lays,
 Sing even love's sweet pains.

“ Thy fond mate sitting near
Is glad as I to hear
 That triumph of thine art;
Just that same song of thine,
Sung over line by line,
 Won her grandmother's heart.”

“ Upon the margin of a reedy pond,
Held in the hollow of low-rounded hills,
Where silence like a presence broods and thrills,
I found Sabbatia. As a lover fond,
Flying the mistress of his heart to greet,
Forgets the world in reading her sweet eyes,
And cries, ‘ For me God makes a Paradise! ’
So, sitting happy at Sabbatia’s feet,
Bathed in the sunshine of her rosy smile,
I murmured, ‘ ’Twas for me she grew so fair! ’
For answer, lightly glided here and there
A blue-winged dragon-fly; a bird the while
Trilled one clear note; tall rushes stirred, and near
I caught the glisten of a sundew’s tear.”

—EMILY S. FORMAN.

CHAPTER VII



HERE could be no better description of the home of the *Sabatia gracilis* on Nantucket, this dainty little rose-pink member of the gentian family. They are occasionally white, but generally there are four pink petals of the solitary blossom, three-quarter-

ters of an inch in diameter, on long peduncles at ends of branches, while in the center of each is a greenish star. The slender, tapering, almost thread-like, light-green leaves clasp the stem. This plant loves salt marshes.

The little pond in the "hollow of low

rounded hills" was blue with pickerel weed, whose great spikes of ragged blue flowers among the arrow-shaped leaves made a royal display. On the edge of the pond sundew mingled with the ferns and mosses, while on the hillsides huckleberries were fast ripening, and the flaming torch of the wood lily flared up here and there, making a vivid picture.

This Philadelphia lily is said to be the one with which the raiment of Solomon in all his glory could not compare. Usually found growing singly, at the summit of the stem sometimes there will be two, three, or even four. The sun, however hot, does not wilt it, for it thrives in the heat. The lily family is known by its regular symmetrical flowers. Almost always its floral envelope is a perianth of six equal parts, white or gaily colored, rarely green, but always graceful and lovely. In many otherwise waste places are seen the orange flame of the Turk's cap lily, standing six feet high, from three to seven in a cluster.

At the same time we get the sabbatia, we find the blue vervain, or simpler's joy, small

purplish-blue flowers, on numerous slender spikes, with lance-shaped opposite leaves, which are as rough as the stem. Virgil refers to vervain as a charm to recover lost love. It is also regarded as an "herb of grace."

"Hallowed be thou, vervain,
As thou growest on the ground,
For in the Mount of Calvary
There thou wast first found."

Yellow asters are now making great bold spots in with the beach grass, and mosses over low hills, and moors stretching far away. Cat-tails and pussy-toes are in perfection.

To-day we found the net-veined chain fern, *Woodwardia augustifolia*, growing in a little swamp between 'Sconset and Sankoty. The fertile fronds of this have very narrow divisions, covered on the lower side with the chains of fruit-dots. The sterile fronds resemble those of the sensitive fern, *Onoclea sensibilis*, except for the rough outline.

In another bog near is the Virginia chain

fern, *Woodwardia Virginica*, growing among a tangle of shrubs and blackberry vines. This name is well given, for the fertile frond is covered on the under side with regular chain-like rows of fruit-dots. The fronds are once pinnate, pinnæ pinnatifid with oblong segments.

Bright little clusters of "butter and eggs" blossomed along the way, the blossom resembling a cornucopia, of butter color, holding a bright yellow yolk of an egg. The abundant leaves are a pale bluish-green, and like soft grass. The name is from the cheese-like odor of this plant, suggesting a dairy not too well kept. The resemblance between the leaves and those of flax gives the other name, of yellow toad-flax.

Growing near along the road was the little Michaelmas daisy, or frost weed, with its much-branched stem and countless small flowers.

Soon the sumac will take on its wonderful autumn foliage of brilliant crimson and gold, while the chokecherry, also long since drop-

ping its dainty petals looking so much like diminutive apple blossoms, shows the dark berries now forming.

In most of the jungles framing the bogs the button bush is now filled with its dainty blossoms, of several hundred little florets crowded together, looking like a little pin-cushion full of pins. This plant belongs to the same family as the little partridge vine, so easily recognized by its smooth, trailing stem, opposite shining evergreen leaves and waxy creamy flowers of early June, which have now become bright red berries, ready for Bob White's Thanksgiving dinner.

“ It is, perhaps, a more fortunate destiny to have a taste for collecting shells than to be born a millionaire. Although neither is to be despised, it is always better policy to learn an interest than to make a thousand pounds: for the money will soon be spent, or perhaps you may feel no joy in spending it; but the interest remains imperishable and ever new. To become a botanist, a geologist, a social philosopher, an antiquary, or an artist, is to enlarge one’s possessions in the universe by an incalculably higher degree, and by a far surer sort of property, than to purchase a farm of many acres.”—STEVENSON.

CHAPTER VIII



OME years ago there was a wonderful mat, of good size, on the beach, between the tall, graceful, waving beach grass and the ocean. It was woven by the *Mertensia maritima*, or sea lungwort, whose spreading leaves of rich, dark purple and pale

bluish-green—on which were the delicate flowers, from the pinkest buds to purplish, and light blue, and occasionally white—blended so harmoniously with the pale gray sand. To-day there is no trace of the mertensia at this spot, but a mile or so farther along a new plant has inaugurated the good work of making mats on the gray sand of the beach.

Strolling along, one finds kelp strewn amid tempting pieces of driftwood, crab shells, skates' eggs, pieces of sponge, stones of all colors washed into curious shapes, horseshoe crabs, and, occasionally, the breast-bone of a bird, bleached snow-white. There are "penny" shells, said to have been used by the Indians for money; "pilgrim" shells, so numerous in the harbors; "cradles," loved by the children; "toe nails," "razors," and many others. Occasionally there are sea urchins and star fish, and we have had one Portuguese man-of-war, that had lost none of its beauty, having all the rainbow tints given by the surface polarization of the light.

In no part of the United States are more beautiful seaweeds found, and those who have the necessary skill and patience can make rare collections of these gifts of Father Ocean. In with these the huge "devil's apron-strings" appear at times—a fleshy growth, several yards long, the leaves are crinkled on the edge and a golden-brown color.

Before we get to the second mat of merten-

sia are the spars of an old wreck, and some miles farther on the seagulls have built their nests in the sand, and in the season for eggs, thousands are found there. The gulls are always hovering over the water and along the cliffs, giving continuous vent to their weird cry, and intermingled is the call of the sand-piper as he runs fearlessly along the shore. Occasionally a great blue heron, standing on one foot, surveys his surroundings, entrancing the wonder of the scene, while fleets of black ducks ride by on the crests of the tossing waves. The only craft are a few dories, whose sturdy owners are trolling for bluefish, or fishing for cod.

Every now and then we come upon the low straggling shrubs of beach plum, laden with the fruit tinged with purples, reds, and yellows. These have replaced the delicate rose-colored flowers which came before the leaves in early June.

Then great patches of red cranberries glow among their shining leaves, making gay mats, and the meal plume, or bearberry, with its

bright, hard little red fruit, trails along the sand dunes, through little vales, over mounds and ridges.

The whiteness of the sandy beach is broken frequently by a little emerald or sapphire pond, and this is framed with tall reeds and grasses, sedges or great tangles of sweet-smelling shrubs and vines. It is now that the great white honey balls of the button bush are bursting into bloom.

Many of the wild flowers have rambled off from their usual haunts, and one is continually experiencing the joy of unexpectedly meeting old friends. St. Andrew's cross strolled near some Bouncing Bets, or as it is commonly known here, "bunch of keys." Linnæus gave this name, St. Andrew's cross, because the four pale yellow petals of the flower approach each other in pairs, making a cross with arms of equal length.

In late August, at Pokomo Head and at Madeket, the salt marshes along the shore are a bluish-lavender tinge, with the marsh rosemary, so suggestive of filmy sea spray.

The branching, leafless stems grow long and thick from the roots, and the flowers, growing loosely along the stem, are most dainty, keeping their color a long time, but lacking fragrance.

“Where winds of the sea blow gaily
And playfully kiss the land,
Marsh rosemary sways and trembles
And nods to the pallid sand.”

Out of the sand at Coatae, covering a large area, grows the prickly pear cactus, whose fleshy, prickly, lobster-claw green leaves—studded with long needles that pierce the hand through a glove—hold the bright yellow blossoms that are the size of a water lily. These delicate flowers, of a fine silky texture, shade from the yellow to a bright red center, and cover acre after acre of ground, amid a weird growth of fantastic red cedars and juniper bushes.

The island, which is thought to have been covered with trees in the past, is without

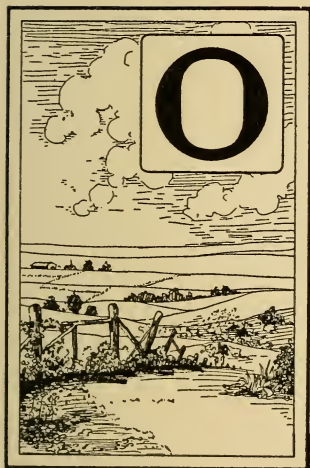
them now, except for a few pines planted with the hope that at some future day Nantucket would not be obliged to bring her firewood from over the water. The early records speak of "meadows, woods, and uplands," and great trunks and roots of trees are found in the boggy lowlands.

The beach golden-rod, with its large orange-yellow, tansy-like fragrant flower-heads, among the bright green lance-shaped leaves, will soon make gay the sand hills and cliffs, in striking contrast to the silvery sheen of the everlasting growing among the bay and sweet fern.

Everywhere are wonderful lichens, strange, weird grasses, mosses with reindeer antlers and horns, making clean, inviting beds, where one can lie and look at the calm, blue sky overhead, and see the white feathery clouds take on fantastic shapes, suggestive of building delightful castles in the air.

“ In shining groups, each stem a pearly ray,
Weird flecks of light within the shadowed wood,
They dwell aloof, a spotless sisterhood.
No Angelus, except the wild bird’s lay,
Awakes these forest nuns; yet night and day,
Their heads are bent, as if in prayerful mood.
A touch will mar their snow, and tempests rude
Defile; but in the mist fresh blossoms stray
From spirit-gardens, just beyond our ken.”

CHAPTER IX



ON Nantucket in the old days, when the sheep were allowed to roam at will, and the raising of them was an industry second only to that of whaling, ten thousand sheep would be gathered to the shear-pens near the "classic" shores of Miacomet

for the wash in the pond and the clipping.

In 1876 Mr. Henry Coffin planted some Scotch pines and larches near the pond. They are now a lovely grove, and the home of two kinds of Scotch heather—the *Calluna vulgaris* and the cross-leaved heath. A son

of Mr. Coffin tells me that when a boy he helped his father plant several thousand trees, with the thought that they would improve the land. These trees were bought at a Western nursery, and arrived with the roots wrapped in moss. In the moss there must have been seeds of the little heather, for very soon the two kinds were found growing there. The cross-leaved heath has its delicate pink clustered flowers along the mossy green stems, while the delicate pink bells of the calluna heather hang from the ends of the waving green stems.

Not far away from the heather, under the somber green of the stately pines, in a carpet of soft brown needles, is found a weird little group of Indian pipes, left over from last summer. Their day has passed, and they stand as tiny black ghosts of their former spotless selves.

It was one of those perfect days of late August when we drove over to the larches—not summer, and not real fall. The sky overhead was a lovely blue, and an occasional autumn

tint was over the moorland. A third kind of heather was in blossom in some pine trees not far away, and while the bell heather had almost gone by, the others were in their perfection.

Just before reaching this we passed a little lane aglow with the yellow blossoms of the sensitive pea, whose exquisite foliage of sensitive leaves, partly closed in the sunshine, is fast asleep when night comes.

Red lilies on the moor were in striking contrast to the yellow of the wild indigo, and the first blazing star, with the showy rose-purple flower-heads racemed along the upper part of the stem. Occasionally white "stars" are found, but they are not so beautiful as the purple.

The scrub oaks looked grotesque, with so many crows about them, for, not having pines in which to build their nests, these sable, raucous-voiced birds use dwarf oaks instead. Anon there was the "Chur-ree! Chur-ree! Chur-ree!" of the blackbirds, and a solitary owl looked down with his big eyes from

a long pine tree. The feather from a flicker's wing was all we saw of him.

Now that September is near, the first golden plover and yellow legs are making their appearance. Black ducks are seen swimming off the shore, with first snipe and teal around the bogs and ponds, apparently waiting for the sportsmen who will come a little later in the fall.

As we approached the roadside thickets and boggy lands, the fleecy white spikes of the clethra, like so many candles, sent forth their incense, and the "honey balls" of the button bush were in striking contrast to the rich purple stems and long, luscious clusters of dark berries hanging heavily amid the autumnal foliage of the poke weed, whose inconspicuous little white blossom of July was scarcely seen.

The "crushed raspberry" of the Joe-Pye-weed, named for a New England doctor, and its near relative, the boneset, with its soft white flowers, were adding to the color effects, while sweet odors arose from the grapes as we passed their haunts, and in the grassy bogs the short-

eared owl was marketing for the little field mice, which he regards as the great delicacy of his dinner table.

Notwithstanding the wealth of plant life which the island holds for those who would seek it, it is believed that many rare plants are destroyed by the burning over of the ground which occasionally occurs.

“ The Cardinal and the blood-red spots,
Its double in the stream,
As if some wounded eagle’s breast,
Slow throbbing o’er the plain,
Had left its airy path impressed
In drops of scarlet rain.”

—HOLMES.

CHAPTER X



OW is the season when along the west edge of Sachacha Pond can be seen a faint tinge of rosy pink among the reeds and sedges. It is given by the hibiscus, or marshmallow, marking the fulfilment of late summer. The flower, which

stands from four to seven feet above the ground, has five large petals, and measures perhaps six inches, while the leaves are a soft green, long and tapering, sometimes described as egg-shaped, the under side being soft with down. It is not easy to get them, for the hibiscus loves a slippery, oozy soil.

Appearing about the same time, but in striking contrast, is a dainty little orchid,

the last of the season—lady's tresses. The slender, fragrant spikes of white flowers, in spiral growth, have a braided look, and that may account for the name. One kind, very much smaller and more slender, is found in dry fields and sandy places. The larger kind is found in wet meadows or bogs, and is not so dainty as the *Spiranthes gracilis*.

And now we have the pretty purplish-pink gerardea, with its mass of bright blossoms tinting the moors and meadows with color. Sometimes growing only a few inches above the ground, but oftener a foot high, it is another herald of the fall. The mints, too, are all blooming in the swampy ground, proclaiming their presence by the pungent aroma of their leaves, as is also the low mossy little milkwort, with its pink clover-like head. The Greek name, *polygale*, or "much milk," was not given because it has a milky juice, but owing to the belief that, through browsing upon the plants, cows become greater milk producers.

Following the road until we reach the little

clubhouse known as Farmers' Institute, a one-room building just large enough to hold four chairs, a stove, and box of saw-dust, we come to swampy ground on the edge of a pasture by a little stream, and there each August appears the cardinal flower. No other flower can compare with it in color. It was of this plant a Frenchman said, "I saw the flower, my admiration is forever"; and John Burroughs says: "But when vivid color is wanted, what can surpass or equal our cardinal flower? There is a glow about the flower as if color emanated from it as from a live coal. The eye is baffled, and does not see the texture or material part as it does in other flowers, but rests in a steady, still radiance. It is not so much something colored as it is color itself. And then the moist, cool, shady places it affects, usually where it has no floral rivals, and where the large dark shadows need just such a dab of fire! Often, too, we see it double, its reflected image in some dark pool heightening its effect." This ardent flower is a favorite with the ruby-

throated humming-bird, who is enticed first by its bright red color, and then by the peculiar formation of the blossom.

In striking contrast to the cardinal flower is the monkey flower, which grows in shady spots in marshy places along the roadside with flowers, pale violet-purple, growing from the axils of the leaves. Exercising a little imagination, one can see in the blossom the grinning face of a little ape or buffoon, and in this way it gets its name.

The mellow, roundish, purple beach plums are now hanging amid the green leaves, the autumnal foliage of the sumac is painting the hedges with scarlet and gold, the small globular fruits, thickly covered with crimson hairs, so rich in color.

The thimbleberry is ripening among the club moss and sundew, and in with them is the Clinton wood fern, and, near, the crested buckler fern. The fronds of the latter are dark green, tall, and slender, the sterile fronds being much shorter than the fertile ones. They are also evergreen, lasting through the

winter after the fertile fronds have perished. The pinnæ of the fertile fronds turn their faces towards the apex of the frond, and are short, lance-shaped, deeply impressed with veins, and cut deeply into oblong, obtuse, finely toothed divisions. The fruit-dots are large and round, halfway between midvein and margin.

The fronds of the Clinton wood fern are larger in every way than those of the Crested buckler, and nearly twice pinnate; the pinnæ are broadest at base, cut into from eight to sixteen pairs of linear, oblong, obtuse, obscurely toothed divisions. The fruit-dots are large, round, and near the midvein.

Cranberries are ripening amid the marsh ferns and rushes. One white-fringed orchid I found to-day full three feet tall. This was far away from its usual haunts, and it appeared to be striving to get above things, where it could look over towards the family home.

The tick-trefoil, with its prostrate branches of round trefoliate leaves and quantity of tiny

purple flowers on the ends of the stems, lends its exquisite coloring to the general effect.

Here and there are the yellow spikes of agrimony, considered in olden times a fine remedy for diseases of the eye:

“ Only the herbs and simples of the wood,
Rue, cinquefoil, gill, vervain, and agrimony.”

The mad-dog skull-cap, bearing its small inconspicuous violet-blue flowers, delights in the damp spots under the hedges, while the wild sunflower “ towers like a priest raising the monstrance over the lesser folk in prayer, and strives to resemble the luminary which he adores.”

All summer there have been very large and brilliantly colored toad-stools scattered over the moors, often among the meal plum, and now peeping up from it are many little ghost flowers, or Indian pipes, while clinging by their barbed teeth, like little grappling hooks, the fruits of the burr-marigold are making themselves felt by man and beast.

“ The lands are lit
With all the autumn blaze of golden-rod,
And everywhere the purple asters nod,
And bend and wave and flit.”

CHAPTER XI



AND now we come to the "good-byes" of summer, the golden-rod and asters; and while this period marks what are called the "melancholy days," yet with them comes the flower that bedecks acres of dull land, changing it into fields of cloth-of-

gold, the royal purples of the aster giving a last rich touch to the autumn coloring, which is already gold and crimson.

Golden-rod is a member of the *Compositæ* family, of which there are ten thousand species. It is a family easily recognized, for the

flowers are always closely packed together in heads, surrounded by an involucre. It is not so easy to distinguish the golden-rods, as there are nearly a hundred kinds in the United States, but a few very common varieties may be easily told.

The botanical name, *Solidago*, is, according to Gray, from the Latin word to make whole, from supposed healing qualities the plant was believed to possess. The *S. caesia*, or wreath golden-rod, gets its name from its bluish stem, which is unbranched. In the axils of the lance-shaped, feather-veined leaves are the pale golden clusters of tiny florets.

S. semperuirens easily may be recognized by its stout stem, thick, fleshy, lance-shaped leaves, and great showy clusters of tansy-like flower-heads. This we call beach golden-rod. It is a magnificent spectacle against the background of sand and beach grass. *S. juncea*, the early plume, or yellow top, has small yellow blossoms waving at the summit of a smooth rigid stem from one to three feet high. *S. rugosa*, or wrinkled-leaved, is tall, lifting

a large compound gracefully curved panicle, with small flower clusters. This is an early variety.

S. ulmifolia is similar to *S. rugosa*, but is easily distinguished by a smoother stem and thin large leaves. *S. odora*, or sweet golden-rod, has fragrant, shiny, bright-green dotted leaves, which, when crushed in the hand, cannot be mistaken for any other species.

The most beautiful of all is the low-growing gray or field golden-rod. It has cottony stems and hoary, grayish-green leaves, which set off its rich, deep yellow coloring to perfection. *S. canadensis*, or Canada golden-rod, has a large, spreading, dense flowered panicle crowning a tall, rough, hairy stem. *S. lanceolata* and *S. tennifolis* are similar. In the former, the tall stem has narrow leaves, and a dense flat-topped, greenish-yellow flower cluster, while the latter has slenderer leaves, rather crowded, and the flower clusters are smaller.

Growing near the golden-rods the aster will always be found—



“ Purple asters here at last!
And thistle seed a-blowing!
And what is this in the blackbird’s song?—
The locusts pipe it shrill and long,
Over and over,—‘ Past, past, past!
The summer days are going.’ ”

There are over a hundred species of asters in the United States, and, as in the case of golden-rod, even a botanist has difficulty in distinguishing them.

We find the aster patens, sometimes called spreading asters, growing along dry roadsides in August. It is low-growing, with bright blue-purple flowers, from twenty to thirty rays in a flower disk, which has quite a curvature, measuring an inch or more across. The center of the flower is a greenish-yellow, and the main stem is covered below with minute short hairs and is clasped by the rough, narrowly oblong leaves. The wide-spreading branches, with slender branchlets, usually terminate with a solitary flower.

In the swamps along the coast we find the

A. novi Belgii, a slender-stemmed, branching plant, growing from one to three feet tall, with violet flower-heads and lance-shaped leaves, while along the edges of dry fields we notice the spreading wand-like branches, thickly covered on their upper side with the tiny flower-heads (resembling snowflakes) of the *A. ericoides*. This is easily recognized by its smaller linear leaves. The *A. umbellatus* is the tall white aster of the swamps and thickets. Growing six or seven feet tall, it is easily identified by its large, flat flower clusters and long tapering leaves.

The ripening cranberries are crushed by every step taken in the quaking sphagnum bogs, these glorious September days, while the fox grapes, hanging in rich clusters, are taking a reddish tint and giving forth a delicate aroma.

Acres and acres are white with the snake root. These flowers are composed of clusters of tubular blossoms, exquisite under the glass, and much more feathery and effective than boneset.

“When has this swamp milk-weed by the roadside looked so fair as now, with its bursting pods and silky seeds—those little waifs thrown out upon the world with every passing breeze? How tenderly they seem to cling to the cozy home where they have been so snugly cradled and protected: and see how they sail away, two or three together, loath to part, until some rude gust shall separate them forever. And here’s the great spiny thistle, that armed highwayman, with florid face and pompon in his cap. But he has had his day, and now we see him old and seedy; his spears are broken, and his silvery gray hairs are floating everywhere, and glistening in the sun.”

And once again the season is expressed by the far-away, far-away autumn call of the bluebird.

“ Ah, come and woo the spring;
List to the birds that sing:
Pluck the primroses; pluck the violets:
 Pluck the daisies,
 Sing their praises;
Friendship with the flowers some noble thought
 begets.”

—EDWARD YONT.

AFTERWORD



HERE is a saying, "Noiseless falls the foot of time which only treads on flowers." The last four months have been lived with the flowers, but nothing has been said so far of the joy these nature's gardens brought into the home; of the great

blue bowls of daisies and buttercups and brunella, the jars of sweet fern and bay, the great brown crocks of stately thistles, or the smaller glass dishes, tumblers and vases of the dainty little violets, bluets, arbutus, and other delicate blossoms of May and June; the rare orchids, or the fine large specimens of royal cinnamon ferns and interrupted fern.

It was the latter part of June that the first fern dishes, which have been so beautiful and refreshing all summer, were started. In these are still growing the crested buckler fern, the snake, sensitive, net-veined chain, Clinton's wood fern, and many little marsh ferns.

Sundew, both round and thread-leaved, have blossomed in them all summer. The wild strawberry has had both blossom and fruit in one—also the cranberry—and now the leaves are tinged with blood red. The cinquefoil, with its yellow blossom, trailed over soft velvety mosses, both green and gray.

In one a calopogon and in another some pogonia filled the air with fragrance. Bedstraw and several other little volunteers, among them milkwort, were welcomed. Partridge and checkerberry vines found little corners, and some dainty white violets, with their faint sweet scent, bloomed for a month; also arethusa and false Solomon's seal.

In making ten dishes each had surprises

and well repaid for the labor. While many theories were advanced as to the best way of taking care of them, experience taught that out of the wind, gently sprayed, with occasional sunshine, the best results followed.

Almost anything makes a good receptacle, lacking ten regular fern dishes. I tried glass bowls, discarded baking dishes, soup plates, and, the most effective of all, green fern dishes. It seems as if there could be nothing more exquisite than these, with the delicate green fronds unfolding, a bit of color here and there, either sundew or orchid, or little vine with red-tinged leaf over fairy-like mosses.

When we got the pitcher plant, which has luxuriated all summer in a Japanese bowl, having been freely watered, there were some baby plants, which made unique additions to the fern dishes, and though there has often been the longing for the Jack-in-the-pulpit, on his emerald green cushion, with the little congregation of pogonia, the dense growth prevented his safe transference.

In due time the wild roses came, and the

tiny buds, just showing pink, were picked over night and put in bowls of water. In the morning they had begun to open their eyes, and for several days were wonderfully beautiful.

While the wild geranium fades quickly, who can resist trying to have it, as did we! Following this came glasses of little pyrola, with delicate ferns, and great masses of fireweed combined with aletris, which is a very prim bouquet when used alone.

The polygala we take up root and all, and in a glass of water it is interesting to study the white subterranean blossoms together with purple ones of the upper stems.

Now the whole cottage is perfumed with the clammy azalea, whose scent represents the "soul of the dew," while the yellow loosestrife makes us a sunny mass of color. But the daintiest and sweetest of all the early summer flowers are the little orchids—tway blade, moccasin flower, arethusa, pogonia, and calopogon.

One can easily tell an orchid when he has

learned the flower is made up of two groups, three petals, and three sepals, and the lower petal, acting as a lip, gives character to each species, while the three sepals are often united to form a kind of hood above this lip, giving the flower the appearance of a bird, butterfly, or some other creature with wings. In the calopogon the lip appears above, in the upper part of the flower, broadened at terminus and bearded with white, yellow, and crimson.

The scarlet pimpernel was so large and so near, several times I brought it in to be kept on the windowsill, near the little cup of sundew. And then came the great masses of white elder. None but a ruthless hand will pick this flower, as it fades so soon, though if left growing it is beautiful and lacy for days among its delicate green leaves. One, of course, must have a large vase of Queen Anne's lace, and a big yellow bowl filled with the indigo, and then a blaze of Indian yellow, in the bustling black-eyed Susans.

Now the vision of the Canton bowl of white orchids, nestling among the crested buckler

ferns, makes me pause and wonder if there was anything all summer equal to it.

We dry the sea lavender and keep the nosegay through the winter as a reminder of the little marshland where it grew among the clams and wonderful red coral-like samphire, and the little spray of heather is kept near the bow of Scotch larch under which it grew.

And now those wonderful cardinal flowers, which we guarded carefully, watching the blood-red blossoms opening one by one towards the end of the spray! The sight of them brings visions of the little meadow where they hide themselves, just as the sabbatia does of the little pond, blue with the pickerel weed, hid in the "hollow of low rounded hills."

The clethra, of which there is so much, and which lasts so well, is very decorative, and breathes its incense through the whole cottage, while the great pink hibiscus, which, with the golden-rod and vervain, have formed a little colony of their own, are all dear to the lover of color. The Japanese bowl of Indian

pipes, arranged with the meal plum, in which they were found growing, lasted several weeks by frequent changing of the water, and were very unique, as were the platters of many-colored mushrooms.

The last orchid of summer, lady's tress, over which Asa Gray and Darwin spent hours of study, comes up from the sandiest soil or gray moss, while near is the blazing star, or purple feather, and each keeps well.

I must not forget the lovely bouquets of gerardia, nor the wonderful vase of grasses, a few of each kind found during the summer, and last of all the "good-byes"—those generous blooms of golden-rod and asters, so rich and bright, and of such a harvest! Once we must have great sprays of grapevine hanging on the chimney place, the fruit just turning—and cranberry vines, with the berries ripening on them.

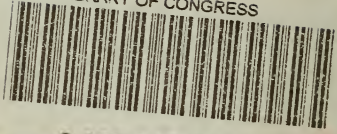
There has been a continuous garden all summer. Half the beauty and comfort of it has not been told; nor of the hours and hours in the open, far, far away from care, and the

vainglory of man. But especially dear is the memory of the "boggy solitudes."

" Pokin' round 'mid ferns and mosses,
Like a hop-toad or a snail,
Somehow seems to lighten crosses,
Where my heart would elsewhere fail."

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